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ABSTRACT

The role of the assistant principal, complete with duties and responsibilities, has not yet been successfully defined. Although assistant principals are often limited to responsibilities such as discipline or bus duty, their role should encompass much more. Assistant principals want to be more than disciplinarians; they want to be included in the instructional operations and have a set of respectable responsibilities. This chapter reviews the literature and finds numerous duties and responsibilities carried out by assistant principals. Although no precise list of duties exists, 26 of the authors related 20 duties common to the assistant principal, including discipline, attendance, student activities, athletics, community agencies, master schedules, principal substitute, building operations, budget, reports, transportation, curriculum, communications, cafeteria, school calendar, and locks and lockers. According to the literature, it is impossible for one person to carry out all these duties and responsibilities. The literature further shows that the principal largely determines the assistant principal's job assignments. Although the assistant principal position is considered by many to be the stepping stone to the principalship, it is also considered by others to be a bona fide administrative career position in itself. A summary table is included. Contains 75 references. (MLH)

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A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE REGARDING THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

by

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A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The role of the assistant principal, complete with duties and responsibilities, is, as yet, unsuccessfully defined. Buckner and Jones (1990) have stated that assistant principals are often limited to responsibilities such as discipline or bus duty. The role should, however, include much more. Assistant principals want to be more than just disciplinarians; they want to be included in the instructional aspects of the school. Assistant principals do not want to do only the jobs that principals do not want to do; they want to have a set of responsibilities that are respectable. According to Reed and Conners (1982), "The character of the high school vice principalship has been a steady and continuous theme in educational journals beginning in 1926 and continuing to the present" (p. 465).

The Roles and Characteristics of Principals

Before the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal can be defined, or redefined, one must understand the role of the principal. Much research has been done on effective schools citing the duties and responsibilities of principals in effective schools. In 1980, Blumberg and Greenfield observed that there were several roles and

responsibilities of the principal. These two men researched several studies completed by other researchers like Knezevich (1975), Lipham and Hoeh (1974), and Roe and Drake (1974). Based upon these studies, the following things were found:

In 1975, Knezevich (cited in Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980) suggested that "more and more the principal is recognized as an executive or administrator and the principalship as a constellation of positions" (p. 394). He further stated that the principal could no longer fulfill all the roles of headmaster and instructional leader, and that there was no justification for him to do so. It was concluded that the principalship was a very demanding position that had "considerable significance in determining the direction of public education" (pp. 394-395).

Lipham and Hoeh in 1974 (cited in Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980) looked at the position of principal and discovered "five major functional areas of responsibility for principals: (1) The Instructional Program, (2) Staff Personnel Services, (3) Student Personnel Services, (4) Financial-Fiscal Resources, and (5) School-Community Relationships" (p. 203). They surmised that effective leadership in these administrative/managerial areas would result in a well-run organization. They further stated that good conceptual skills, human relation skills, and technical skills were necessary for effective school principals.

Also in 1974, Roe and Drake (cited in Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980) combined the roles of administrator/manager with the role of leadership in determining the duties and responsibilities of the principal. They determined ten major responsibilities for the principal in the administrative\management area and eleven major responsibilities in the educational leadership area. The administrative duties include: record keeping, budget development and control, personnel, discipline, scheduling, building administration, supplies and equipment checks, pupil accounts, and monitoring the instructional process. Among the responsibilities in the educational leadership area are: motivation of staff, accountability, improvement of programs, staff evaluation and development, evaluation of student performance, etc.

Knezevich (1975) saw the principal as an executive manager, Lipham and Hoeh (1974) saw him as leader, and Roe and Drake (1974) saw the principal as a combination of administrator/manager and leader (all cited in Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980). Today, as in the past, how the principal perceives the role determines the direction of the principalship. The principal determines if the position is to be one of educational leadership, one of administration/management, or a combination of the two.

Aieta, Barth, and O'Brien (1988) made some statements about the traditional high school principal. They saw the principal as a heroic captain of a ship in an authoritarian

leadership position where life was lonely at the top. However, those with the "right stuff" would get the job done by seeing to it that students, teachers, and parents behaved properly. The principal was to be the leader who ensured that nothing interfered with doing the job assigned by the superintendent.

Miller and Lieberman (1982) looked at certain roles seen as being held by administrators. Among these roles are omniscient overseer, sifter and sorter of knowledge, pace setter and routinizer, referee, linker and broker, translator and transformer, paper pusher, accountant and clerk, educational leader, and scapegoat. These authors concluded that there is a huge gap between what the principal is supposed to be and what the principal actually is. They saw two worlds for principals: "the world of 'is' and the world of 'ought'" (p. 367).

Data have shown that there are many important ingredients in successful schools. One of these is the degree and quality of each principal's leadership (Strother, 1983). Strother concluded that the principal must provide strong administrative leadership in effective schools.

Clark and Lotto (cited in Strother, 1983) compiled a list of 53 aspects of a principal's role from an extensive review of literature on effective schools. They then asked a group of 11 researchers, analysts, and policy makers to rank the aspects according to importance (Strother, 1983). Among the top 53 aspects listed were the following:

(a) emphasizes student achievement as the primary outcome of schooling, (b) emphasizes student achievement in basic skills as the primary program outcome, (c) monitors and evaluates student progress, (d) communicates organizational goals clearly, (e) emphasizes acquisition of basic skills as the central instructional goal of the school, (f) establishes high standards of performance for students and for teachers, (g) holds high expectations for student behaviors and achievements, and (h) holds and conveys high expectations for teachers' performances in classrooms. The 11 experts felt that school administrators should possess "reasonable intelligence, high energy levels, and the strong desires to succeed" (p. 292).

Leithwood and Montgomery, also cited in Strother, 1983, stated it another way. Through their review of literature, they suggested that effective principals: (a) decide who will participate in innovative school projects, (b) disperse decision making authority and encourage its use, (c) seek the advice of staff members on important issues, (d) gain personal experience by involving themselves directly with such program activities as in service training, (e) encourage teachers to evaluate their own professional competence and to set goals for grants, (f) monitor student progress closely, and (g) create time for other goal related work by handling routine matters effectively. They further stated that the ongoing process of growth produces good

principals and that they learn how to be effective through this ongoing process.

Two studies, one by Shakeshaft (1986) and another by Erickson (1985), dealt with effective leadership from the stand point of female administrators. The point they made and the characteristics they felt important for effective leadership appear to be those that would be important to any administrator whether male or female. Shakeshaft (1986) found six themes that emerge as behavior consistently associated with effective schools. According to Shakeshaft, these principals were found to:

1. emphasize achievement and convey to teachers their commitment to fostering academic achievement,

2. set instructional strategies and accept responsibility for facilitating their accomplishment,

3. provide an orderly atmosphere and ensure that the school's climate is conducive to learning,

4. frequently evaluate student progress in light of performance expectations,

5. coordinate instructional programs consistent with the overall goals of the program and the school, and

6. support teachers with regard to staff development.

Erickson (1985) found that there is conflict in the role of the principal for the female. She stated that the role of principal calls for characteristics usually seen as masculine. These characteristics include the following: assertiveness, strength, the ability to remain cool and to

control one's emotions, and independence. Erickson said that the female administrator is seen as a composed, self-confident, and knowledgeable professional in her field; sensitive and assertive; and striving to appear efficient, capable, and aware. The female administrator is driven to achieve and is learning when to lead and when to follow. She makes changes slowly and knows that leadership must be earned.

Farris (1989) felt that principals, whether male or female, should possess certain basic qualities or characteristics in order to carry out administrative duties and responsibilities. Among those qualities listed by this researcher are loyalty, courage, commitment, timing, competitiveness, self-confidence, accountability, responsibility, credibility, drive, dependability, and stewardship. Based on these assumptions, she felt that Atilla the Hun would have been a GREAT principal!

Brown and Rentschler (1973) also listed some characteristics of the principalship that they felt were important. While their list was not stated in the same terms as that of Farris, many of the same ideas can be inferred. Brown and Rentschler included leadership, administrative ability, poise, personality, health, and emotional stability among their list of characteristics important to effective principals.

"The Myth of the Great Principal" (Rallis & Highsmith, 1986) provided a look at school management and instructional

leadership as "two different tasks that cannot be performed well by a single individual" (p. 300). They stated that before the 1950s, principals were seen as educational leaders of their buildings. During the 1950s and 1960s, the emphasis became one of management--budget, personnel, and public relations. The ability of the principal to manage both roles, according to Rallis and Highsmith (1986), is difficult if not impossible. Rallis and Highsmith (1986) stated that an effective instructional leader must be a visionary; must be able to see and communicate the need to move ahead, to get somewhere, and to transform possibilities into beliefs that everyone can share; and must be able to provide a focus for the solutions to problems.

While all of the authors have some different views on what characteristics an effective principal might have or on what the duties and responsibilities of an effective principal might be, some characteristics and duties are common to all authors' writings. The principal is seen as the orchestrator of the school, responsible for what goes on, yet, able to go beyond that and foresee problems that might arise. The principal emphasizes achievement, communicates clearly with both teachers and students, and provides leadership consistent with the goals of the school.

The Impact of the Principal on the Job of the Assistant Principal

To determine the roles, duties, and responsibilities of the assistant principal, one must first explore and

understand how the principal impacts the position of the assistant principal. Gorton (1987) found that "the principal is the key to improving the assistant principalship" (p. 3). He further found that "national studies and reports can be helpful, but no other entity has a greater impact on the fortunes of an assistant principal in a specific school than the principal of that school" (p. 3).

Likewise, Rodrick (1986) questioned whether principals provided assistants with the kind of help, direction, supervision, and nurturing that increased their chances of becoming good principals. He further stated that "the principal has the power and authority to set a limit on the amount of time assistants spend 'doing' and increase their time engaged in educational leadership" (p. 92).

Manatt (1989) stated that much of what the assistant principal does depends on the principal and not on the job description and that the entire structure of the assistant principal's position is in the hands of the principal. Marshall and Mitchell (1991) said that the principal exercises discretion in assigning the assistant principal his or her roles and responsibilities and that the assistant principal is expected to follow the directives of the principal. McIntyre (1988) stated that "the effectiveness of assistant principals (APs) depends on the principal's attitude toward the role of the assistant principal and his or her definition of the term 'effective'" (p. 1). McIntyre

also stated that the principal is the key person in the assistant principal's job performance and that unless the principal supports the position of assistant principal, the person occupying the position of assistant principal will be very disappointed.

In other studies, Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) observed that the principal has a responsibility to provide both personal and professional growth for the assistant principal by being a mentor. Marshall (1992) said that assistant principals do many of the same tasks as principals spending a majority of their time dealing with issues of school management, student activities and services, community relations, personnel, and curriculum and instruction. However, Marshall realized that assistant principals lack the position, power, and status of principals and that it is the principal who delegates tasks and responsibilities to assistant principals.

LaRose (1987) said that when the qualities possessed by principals and their assistants complement each other, a stronger leadership is present, and Goodlad (1983) stated that many new principals are taken out of the classroom in June and immediately thrown into the new job. There is little experience that prepares them for this new position. Building on these two statements, LaRose (1987) looked at the professional development program for new assistant principals offered by the Calgary, Alberta, Board of Education. LaRose (1987) discovered that the program

contained in-service, mentorship, and observation and thus bridged the gap between previous roles and the new roles. Participation was voluntary. Through the use of this program, it was found that assistant principals increased in competence in the profession's technical and political aspects, and that their competence and self-confidence was bolstered. One participant stated that help was always available.

If the principal is the key person in improving the assistant principal's job contributions, then should not the assistant principal have a defined job description, free of ambiguities allowing the assistant principal to use talents and expertise in certain areas? Nickerson and Rissmann-Joyce (1991) found that assistant principals come to the job with past experiences and talents that can be built upon to enhance the position. They were once effective teachers who related well to parents and students and who were interested in curricular activities.

Gorton (1987) found that most assistant principals are qualified for and want to play a larger leadership role in the schools. He stated that the school principal is the key person to maximize the assistant principal's leadership contribution, that it is the school principal who works more closely with the assistant principal than any other individual in the school, and that it is the school principal who is more important to the professional success of the assistant principal than any other person. Yet,

"Critics, both inside and outside the profession, are nearly unanimous in their criticism of current school administrative programs, which have remained virtually static for the past quarter of a century" (Smith & Greene, 1990, p. 20).

Boyer (1991) stated that "principals are perhaps the most instrumental in deciding the tasks and assignments that the assistant principal receives" (p. 6). Boyer felt that the principal and assistant principal should work together to determine the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal. He further stated that a long range effort by both principals and assistant principals might result in a new and, perhaps, better assignment of roles and responsibilities for the assistant principal.

The Evolution of the Assistant Principal

Panyako and Rorie (1987) found that assistant principals were originally hired to free the principal of administrative and management details that are essential but can be carried out by someone else. Shockley and Smith (1981) stated it a little differently by saying that assistant principals were hired during the post war era of the 1940s to assist the principal in meeting the increasing demands of the job. The authors further stated that the purpose of adding the assistant principal was to assist the principal in his or her job. This should provide more time for the principal to more effectively meet the demanding responsibilities of the job. The assistant principalship

should not change the structure of the principalship. Among other delegated tasks of the assistant principal were those tasks that the principal found undesirable.

Along these same lines, Kelly (1987) saw the position of the assistant principal as having performed the same duties and responsibilities ever since the position was created. She referred to the study done by Austin and Brown in 1970, and concluded that the assistant principal's position is essentially one of helping the principal by sharing the load, freeing him or her to be the instructional leader of the school.

The School District's Use of Assistant Principals

Another question one must ask in looking at the role, duties, and responsibilities of an assistant principal is "do schools and school districts make maximum use of the interests and talents of their assistant principals?" (Gorton, 1987, p. 36). Gorton (1987) felt that there was no definitive answer to that question. He stated that too often the answer could be negative. He also found that assistant principals come to this position with varied experiences and broad qualifications, yet, the major responsibility of most assistant principals is discipline. Gorton (1987) also said that most assistant principals would like to have additional responsibilities in such areas as curriculum, advising parent groups, public relations, and

the school budget. He further stated that they do not want total responsibility, only increased involvement.

Two more recent studies had more to say about the school district's use of the assistant principal. Studies by Hartzell (1991) and Nickerson and Rissmann-Joyce (1991) showed that the school district should consider the talents and expertise of assistant principals. Hartzell (1991) found that assistant principals new to a school system or district should be assigned responsibilities that will allow the new assistant principal to utilize individual talents. Nickerson and Rissmann-Joyce (1991) found that assistant principal's past experiences and talents can be built upon to enhance the position of assistant principal.

Rodrick (1986) also questioned whether or not principals are working with assistant principals to achieve maximum performance. He questioned whether principals expect assistant principals to "take care of" the loose ends --the jobs neither the principal nor anyone else wants to do. Rodrick found typical tasks of assistant principals to include supervising buses, listening to teachers' explanations of problems they are having with students, informing teachers of student placements, hearing students describe their difficulties with teachers and other students, consulting with counselors, writing notes responding to teachers' inquiries, talking with teachers about their schedules, observing the cafeteria, and checking out the restrooms. He questioned which of these activities

was necessary, which ones someone else could do, and what other alternatives might be available.

Marshall (1992) put it another way when she stated that the tasks of some assistant principals "are routine, possess low visibility, lack evaluation and review, and provide no opportunity for creative, risky projects and thus no opportunity for special recognition and reward" (p. 10). Marshall (1992) went on to say that as a disciplinarian, the assistant principal may not be provided with visibility or be allowed interaction with people in higher administrative positions.

According to Panyako and Rorie (1987), when people refer to the "principal", they refer only to the chief executive of the school. If this is true, then the assistant principal or vice principal receives little or no recognition, prestige, or authority in the school. He or she may be considered invisible, and this might create problems for those in assistant principal positions. Reed and Conners (1982) summarized that since 1926, many of the studies have addressed the same or similar research questions: (a) "What is the role of the vice principal?" (p. 466), (b) "What is the relationship of the role to the roles of other site administrators?" (p. 466), and (c) "What is the relationship of the role of the vice principal to the organizational context and environment of the school?" (p. 467). Reed and Conners (1982) and Panyako and Rorie

(1987) saw the need for further research on the role of the assistant principal.

One of the latest studies by Pellicer and Stevenson (1991) stated:

> If the position of assistant principal is ever to receive respect commensurate with the importance of the position to the proper functioning of the school, the principal will simply have to stop designing assistant principal's jobs in isolation, primarily assigning tasks that principals don't want to do or don't know how to do. (p. 64)

The authors further stated that assistant principals, better than anyone else, are in a unique position to understand how their talents and interests can best benefit the school.

Hassenpflug (1991) stated that school systems often misuse a major resource--that of the assistant principal. Hassenpflug believes that assistant principals are often given non-management tasks that can be performed by clerical staff, teachers, counselors, community agencies, parent volunteers, or others. This is a waste of the training and motivation of these assistant principals.

The Assistant Principalship as a Springboard to the Principalship

Another aspect of the assistant principalship that must be questioned is whether or not the assistant principalship is seen primarily as a stepping stone or springboard to the principalship or whether it is a career administrative position in and of itself. Many researchers and authors have addressed this issue: Kelly (1987), Valentine (1980), Potter (1980), and Fulton (1987).

Kelly (1987) viewed the assistant principalship as a training ground for the principalship. Kelly stated that "the literature shows that the typical assistant principal spends little time on tasks that constitute major responsibilities of a principal such as the supervision and evaluation of teachers" (p. 14). Valentine (1980) discussed the issue of the eventual principalship and stated that he believes principals have an obligation to groom and develop their assistants for the principalship. He found, however, that all too often the principal does not develop the assistant principal for the principalship.

Potter (1980) also discussed the issue of the eventual principalship by saying that "for the most part, assistant principals feel their work experiences should pave the way for an eventual principalship or some other administrative position" (p. 9). He went on to say that assistant principals want to be more involved in the school program. They do not wish to be "bottom line" administrators.

Fulton (1987) felt even more strongly about the assistant principalship as a training ground for the principalship. He stated that "everyone who holds the position of assistant principalship should strive toward the principalship" (p. 52). He saw the position as a training ground and believed that it is the principal's responsibility to thoroughly prepare the assistant principal for the position.

Two other authors, Bates and Shank (1983) suggested changing the title of assistant principal to associate principal. They felt this would allow more responsibility to be associated with the position. They felt that the associate position would provide an excellent training ground for the principalship because it would provide more responsibility for the school's operation.

Howley (1985) felt much stronger about the assistant principal's position stating that "one does not aspire to become an assistant or vice principal. One aspires to become a vice principal to become something else" (p. 88). He saw the position totally as a stepping stone or training ground.

One other study, that of Austin and Brown (1970), showed that 80% of all assistant principals advanced to other administrative positions whereas 29% to 39% expected to remain in the assistant principal's position as a career. This appears to indicate that the position was viewed primarily as a stepping stone. However, this study was done some 20 years ago, and much has changed since that time.

Six other articles also dealt with the issue of the assistant principalship as a training ground and also questioned whether or not principals were helpful in this area. Rodrick (1986), Brown and Rentschler (1973), Greenfield (1985a), Kelly (1987), Austin (1972) and Gross, Shapiro, and Meehan (1980) all shared views regarding this issue.

Brown and Rentschler, in their study in 1973, stated that "in far too many cases the principal has given little or no thought to preparing the assistant for the top job, assigning discipline as his number one responsibility" (p. 38). Greenfield (1985a) found that the role of the assistant principal is to serve as a transition position for those who are going from the classroom to an administrative position.

Marshall, Mitchell, Gross, and Scott (1992) saw the assistant principalship as "a major recruitment position for the principalship and other administrative positions" (p. 80). They, along with Gaertner (1970) and Marshall and Greenfield (1985), showed that "most principals have served as assistant principals" (p. 80). Marshall, Mitchell, Gross, and Scott (1992) further stated that most assistant principals viewed the position as one where one learned skills and proved oneself, and most had an idea where they wanted to be in the future. This study showed that only four of the 20 subjects (20%) involved in the study wanted to remain in the position of assistant principal. Three of these 20 were men who were content with their positions since they had control of their time and enjoyed their assignments. The one woman defined herself as a career person who felt that her personality was better fitted for the assistant principalship. She did not want the pressures or stresses that the principalship holds. Another finding of this study was that 43% of the men elected to remain in

the assistant principal position while only 8% of the women saw this as a career end. This, however, may be skewed since the subjects were not randomly selected (Marshall, et al, 1992).

Rodrick (1986) questioned whether principals really do provide assistants with opportunities that will increase their chances of becoming good principals. Rodrick (1986) along with Shockley and Smith (1981) felt that principals sometimes give assistant principals the jobs they do not want to do. Kelly (1987) agreed with the study by Austin and Brown of 1970 where eight assistant principals looked upon the position as a preparation for the principalship. She further agreed that most assistant principals spent time at tasks they would not perform as principals, and she did not see the assistant principalship as providing adequate training for the principalship.

The trio of Gross, Shapiro and Meehan (1980) viewed the assistant principalship as a stepping stone much differently than did the other researchers and authors. They found that due to current trends and happenings, the assistant principalship is seen in a different light than it was just a few years ago. Long considered merely a 'stepping stone' to the principalship, many assistant principals are now staying in their positions for longer lengths of time due to reduced mobility and closed schools. Many are satisfied with what the job has to offer and are content to remain in the position as the number two person in charge. Because of

this, "some schools have sought to 'enlarge' the assistantship by including in it a variety of functions to provide satisfaction and reward to the job holder" (p. 27).

The Assistant Principalship as a Career Goal

It appears as the 1990s begin that this particular view has come around once again. Many assistant principals appear content with their positions and are not seeking the position of a principalship or of a higher administrative office. Two 1991 studies addressed this issue of the assistant principalship as a career goal.

Studies by Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) and also by Pellicer and Stevenson (1991) recognized that the assistant principalship can be either a stepping stone to a higher administrative office or a career commitment. Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd recognized that principals have both personal and professional responsibilities to the assistant principal regardless of whether the assistant principal views the position of assistant principal as a stepping stone or a career commitment. Pellicer and Stevenson (1991) looked at it as a career goal. There are various reasons given by Pellicer and Stevenson (1991) concerning the assistant principalship as a career goal. Among these reasons are that persons in principalships are remaining in them longer; that many of today's assistant principals are the same age as the principals; and that principals are satisfied with their career choices and are not looking for change.

Contemporary Views of the Assistant Principal's Roles

and Responsibilities

Much information is available through research and other articles about the duties and responsibilities of assistant principals. Although some literature focuses on the ambiguities found in the assistant principalship (Greenfield, 1985b), much of the available literature deals with what appear to be the major functions of assistant principals. Although assistant principals supervise a wide range of duties, and each day holds something different, the average assistant principal does not have a clearly defined list of duties and responsibilities. As Marshall (1992), Black (1980), and Reed and Conners (1982) have all stated, there is no consistent, well-defined job description, delineation of duties, or way of evaluating outcomes from accomplished tasks. Sometimes, this creates frustration. However, the most common duties of the assistant principal as seen in many studies are student discipline, student attendance, and student activity.

Bates and Shank (1983) said that "When students, parents, or assistant principals themselves are asked to describe the assistant principal's job, a common response is 'discipline, attendance, and supervision of student activities'" (p. 112). The assistant principal is "perceived to be a technician . . . based on the number of jobs the principal does not wish to do or on the amount of authority the principal will share or relinquish" (p. 113).

The Assistant Principals Commission (1980) said that

the role of the assistant principal varies greatly from school to school depending upon school needs and enrollments, strengths of personnel filling these positions, and the characteristics of the administrative team. They feel that it is impossible to provide a single definition of the many varied duties performed by the assistant principal. This position paper further stated that "many assistant principals [sic] primary duties are to act as a clerk of attendance and a disciplinarian" (p. 2).

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) and Reed and Himmler (1985) also looked at the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) showed the top three responsibilities of the assistant principal to be student discipline, student activities, and student attendance. Reed and Himmler (1985) found that discipline took precedence over other assignments.

Miller and Lieberman (1982) and Mitchell (1980) took the same stand. Miller and Lieberman (1982) stated that "though usually associated with school discipline, the role of the assistant principal varies from school to school" (p. 362). Mitchell (1980) saw discipline as a major function of assistant principals but he related how through discipline the assistant principal's role changes to that of disciplinarian counselor, and sometimes, to mediator. Gorton (1987) also agreed that discipline is the major responsibility of most assistant principals, whereas Austin (1972) found that assistant principals have two common

functions--discipline and attendance. Apart from this, he found no job description available.

Still other authors made similar studies with similar results. Smith (1987) stated that less than a decade ago, secondary school assistant principals were associated primarily with discipline and attendance; Brown and Rentschler (1973) said discipline was the assistant principal's number one responsibility; and Kelly (1987) said that the eight assistant principals studied by Austin and Brown in 1970, described discipline as a negative, unending, relentless, and unchanging duty. Gross, Shapiro, and Meehan (1980); Greenfield (1985a); and Howley (1985) also listed discipline as a major function or high priority of the assistant principal.

Three later studies also showed discipline to be a major function of assistant principals. Buckner and Jones (1990) stated that assistant principals have limited responsibilities and that discipline and bus duty are often among the top responsibilities; Nickerson and Rissmann-Joyce (1991) found that assistant principals often become frustrated acting only as disciplinarians; and Hassenpflug (1991) stated that she was once told that the assistant principal had five major responsibilities: disciplining students, distributing textbooks, supervising the cafeteria, assigning lockers, and attending student activities. Hassenpflug further stated that many of these tasks could be handled by other personnel.

Other works on assistant principals present the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal in different ways. Rather than listing discipline, attendance, and student activities as the three major functions of an assistant principal, these men and women listed all of the competencies and roles they saw as duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal. These men and women shared many of the same duties and responsibilities; yet, they also listed some different ones. They also saw things from different perspectives depending on with whom they spoke and the questions asked in the studies. Many also provided job descriptions for assistant principals based upon the competencies and roles played by assistant principals in the areas they studied.

In 1980, the National Association of Secondary School Principals published an article entitled "Job Description for the Assistant Principal" in their Bulletin. After an examination of many job descriptions, the study divided the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal into five major areas including administration, teaching personnel, student personnel, curriculum, and external relations. Each of these five areas contains different duties and responsibilities.

Administration, according to the job description of 1980, included the following duties and responsibilities for the assistant principal: (a) serve as the principal in the absence of the principal, (b) follow school and district

policy, (c) assist in preparing the budget, (d) prepare a school calendar complete with school activities, (e) maintain an inventory, and (f) arrange bus duties and schedules. Teaching personnel included observation and evaluation of teachers and preparation of teacher handbooks; student personnel consisted of discipline, supervising guidance, and being highly visible. The area of curriculum included curriculum revision and improving and supervising the testing program; and external relations involved working with community agencies, law enforcement, judicial personnel, and getting out news releases to media persons.

Kriekard and Norton in 1980 and in 1987, conducted research studies centering on the competencies or roles of the assistant principal. Norton and Kriekard (1987) found and verified both real and ideal competencies for the assistant principal. Real competencies included those actually performed by the assistant principal whereas ideal competencies were those that the assistant principal should perform in order to be more efficient. Kriekard and Norton (1980) found that the problem of defining the assistant principal's role was due in part to the limited attention given to studying this role because some people fail to see the significance of the role. They based their studies on one done by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and presented six major task areas of the assistant principalship. The six areas consisted of: (a) school management, (b) staff personnel, (c) community

relations, (d) student activities, (e) curriculum and instruction, and (f) pupil personnel items. Within each task area, certain competencies were found. The areas and their competencies included:

School management--The competencies include the ability to manage time, prioritize responsibilities, and attend to details; to organize, coordinate, and delegate authority; to prepare a budget; to fill in for the principal when necessary; and to have effective communication skills.

Staff personnel--This includes competencies ranging from being able to select, observe, and evaluate both certified and classified employees to organizing and administering extra classroom activities. It also includes managing counseling and guidance programs and conducting professional growth activities.

Community relations--The assistant principal is to develop and maintain effective communications through as many means of contact as is possible.

Curriculum and instruction--The assistant principal should prepare and go by the master schedule; utilize various methods of curriculum evaluation; and communicate clearly with feeder schools.

Student activities--This area should include managing student activity accounts; organizing and supervising student organizations; supervising the athletic programs; planning facility use; and maintaining the master schedule.

Pupil personnel items--This includes managing and

supervising attendance procedures; assuming responsibility for all student management procedures, such as discipline; and managing the guidance and counseling programs.

Marshall and Greenfield (1987) found that assistant principals are working to maintain organizational stability. Some of the assistant principal's duties include supervision, monitoring, support, and remediation. Remediation, according to Marshall and Greenfield (1987), refers to discipline. They felt that the assistant principal must ensure that student behavior conforms to and meets school rules and regulations and is acceptable. Among the tools they listed for use by the assistant principal are contacting parents, assigning extra work, suspension, parent conferences, and expulsion. The roles of assistant principals as seen by Marshall and Greenfield (1987) are drill sergeant, bully, mother superior, and empathizer.

Four areas were listed as primary roles of the assistant principal by Potter (1980). These areas include the following: (a) instruction, teacher evaluation, and in-service; (b) attendance and discipline; (c) vocational education and plant management; and (d) athletics and activities. Fulton (1987) also divided the competencies of the assistant principal into four categories: administrative relationships, teacher relationships, student relationships, and community relationships. Under administrative relationships, Fulton found that an assistant principal should be able to complete a master schedule; do a budget;

coordinate a master calendar of all school activities and events; coordinate transportation; work with testing; work with law enforcement; and carry out policies of the principal, school district, and state. Teacher relationships include observation and evaluation, duties and responsibilities assignments, interviewing prospective employees, and academic responsibilities. Discipline, morale, enthusiasm, and school spirit fall into the student relationships area, whereas community relationships rest in familiarity, communication, and maintaining high visibility.

Kelly (1987) in reviewing the study by Austin and Brown (1970), determined the assistant principal's major functions as "looking after professional inservice work; the co-curricular program; building operations and maintenance; and student personnel services, particularly discipline and attendance" (p. 14). The Austin and Brown study in 1970 found 21 duties common to the assistant principals involved in their study. These 21 duties include: responsibilities of the principal in the absence of the principal; student programming; discipline; attendance; alternative education program; locks and lockers; co-curricular program; student council; building superintendent and maintenance; textbook rental; parking; fire drills; school pictures; graduation; announcements; awards; supplies; staff support; exam scheduling and supervision; junior high promotion decisions and report cards. Assistant principals also assist with the budget, time tables, and monthly and yearly reports.

Rodrick (1986) listed the typical tasks of assistant principals as supervising bus loading and unloading; listening to teachers' explanations of problems they are having with students; checking with parents about students' attendance; informing teachers of changes in students' placements; hearing students describe their difficulties with teachers and other students; consulting with counselors and/or psychologists; writing notes responding to teachers' inquiries; assessing behavior, achievement, and attendance; observing in the cafeteria; and checking the restrooms.

The Assistant Principals Commission (1980) in its position paper stressed five major areas of professional responsibility of assistant principals: students, administrative team, staff, curriculum, and community. It further stated that the assistant principal's first priority must be for the students and their growth and that the assistant principal must be a full fledged member of the administrative team, partners with the principal, curriculum coordinator, assistant superintendent, and superintendent and involved in the recruiting and hiring of personnel. The assistant principal should also assist in planning and developing the curriculum and the co-curricular programs and be involved in community relations.

Reed and Himmler (1985) in reviewing the study done by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) said that the assistant principal spends a lot of his or her time on three aspects of supervision during the school day when the students are

present. These three activities are monitoring, supporting, and remediating or disciplining. Monitoring involves surveying the school for signs that student conduct complies with and conforms to the rules and regulations and values of the school; support largely involves engaging in activities that reinforce student conduct with respect to school values. Remediation revolves around activities that transform student misconduct into conduct accepted by and complying with school values.

Hess (1985), Gorton and Kattman (1985), and Black (1980) also listed duties and responsibilities of assistant principals. Hess stated that there is an endless stream of organizational tasks that make up the work of the assistant principal. This work may range from student discipline to supervision of maintenance to development of reports and staff evaluation--all within the same working day.

Gorton and Kattman (1985) looked at assistant principals on the elementary level, but the list is similar to the duties and responsibilities of secondary school assistant principals. The main duties of the elementary assistant principal include administering student discipline, supervising substitute teachers, providing instructional materials, and establishing teachers' duty rosters. They found that assistant principals also want more responsibility in the areas of orienting new teachers and planning teachers' in-service programs, conducting student orientations and developing the school calendars,

developing curriculum and selecting textbooks, and administering public relations programs and deciding school policy.

Black (1980) conducted a study in Baltimore, Maryland to classify the roles of the secondary school assistant principal there. The study found six major areas covered by assistant principals--instruction, personnel, pupil personnel, student activities, professional development, and school management. Thirty-four duties were found in these six areas. Supervisors, peers, and subordinates agreed on some duties of the assistant principal. These people "agreed that the assistant principal should have considerable to total involvement in" (p. 35) certain areas. These areas as quoted by the research include:

. supervising student behavior in buildings and on grounds,

. conferring with parents regarding their students' problems,

. dealing with individual student discipline problems,

. arranging professional meetings,

. helping to arrange and organize a school schedule,

. assisting new teachers in the system, and

. initiating some flexible scheduling (p. 35).

These same people also disagreed on a number of duties and responsibilities. Among the duties and responsibilities

disagreed upon are supervising athletic and nonathletic events, reading professional literature, and counseling with teachers regarding their personal problems.

Smith (1987) conducted his study with assistant principals in Washington State. He sent the questionnaire to secondary school assistant principals, principals, directors of secondary education, and district superintendents. Assistant principals in Smith's study included the following among the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal:

- supervising student behavior in buildings and on grounds,
- dealing with student discipline problems,
- helping with attendance,
- supervising athletic activities,
- visiting classroom to supervise teachers,
- acting as a liaison with community agencies, and
- working with guidance counselors.

Higher level administrators in Smith's study (1987) saw the assistant principals' duties and responsibilities differently. These administrators included the following among the assistant principal's duties:

- supervising student behavior in building and on grounds,
- dealing with individual student discipline problems,

- conferring with parents regarding student problems,
- reading professional literature,
- consulting with guidance counselors,
- attending professional meetings,
- helping arrange and organize a school schedule,
- visiting classrooms to supervise teachers,
- helping with attendance, and
- acting as a liaison with community agencies.

Reed and Conners (1982) found the primary duties to be discipline including counseling, supervision of students when they are not in class, coordination of the extra curricular program, and the school activity calendar; Brown and Rentschler (1973) listed discipline, building maintenance, school activities, student personnel services, curriculum, athletics, and staff recruitment as being among the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal. Panyako and Rorie (1987) said the assistant principal traditionally deals with "supervision of buses, cafeteria, student lockers, sports events, fund raising, buildings and grounds, and student behavior management (commonly known as discipline)" (p. 6).

Hunter (1990) believed that assistant principals should do more than solve discipline problems. Hunter wished to see assistant principals spend more time working with students and teachers to reduce and, perhaps, prevent discipline problems. This researcher felt that the

principal should encourage the assistant principal to become more involved in classroom management and in instructional leadership.

Three articles have taken a recent look at the assistant principalship. Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) stated that the assistant principal is viewed by teachers and the principal as the first line of support when classroom behavior becomes unacceptable. Calabrese (1991), in another article, said as a former assistant principal, that regardless of the other roles filled by an assistant principal, the school board, principal, teachers, students, and community all still viewed and evaluated the assistant principal as a disciplinarian. Calabrese found that the current duties of the assistant principal include disciplinarian, instructional leader, change agent, prescriptive agent, ethical model, motivator, community relations agent, care agent, and innovator.

Pellicer and Stevenson (1991) stated that the assistant principal's duties range from "student discipline and arranging school dances to guiding curriculum development and evaluating teachers" (p. 60), but "student discipline is still the number one responsibility of high school assistant principals" (p. 61). Pellicer and Stevenson saw the following as the top ten duties and responsibilities of current assistant principals: student discipline, teacher evaluation, student attendance, school policies, special arrangements for the opening and closing of school, school

master schedule, emergency arrangements, instructional methods, school-related building use, and orientation of new students.

Two studies, one by Greenfield (1985a) and one by Austin (1972), found that job descriptions for assistant principals are hard to come by and practically nonexistent. Another study by Glant (1987), in a rather light-hearted manner, told those who were aspiring to be assistant principals about some of the duties they could expect. Among some of the things she listed are the ability to change locker combinations, fill pop machines, work the P.A., give students "the look" and receive an instant hush, write notes and memos, serve on curriculum committees, and be referred to by teachers as "they". While these may not be considered actual "responsibilities" of an assistant principal, these are often responsibilities that must be handled by the assistant principal. Yet, these so-called responsibilities are things that can be handled by almost anyone in the field of education. It appears in this article that the position of assistant principal often is used as a catch-all position and that the person serving as assistant principal should be able to handle a variety of activities and situations. The article, however, did bring some much needed humor to the subject.

Garawski (1978) looked at job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. He found the highest degrees of job satisfaction in the areas of teacher evaluation,

supervision, and preparation of the school master schedule. Dissatisfactions ranged from salary and having supervisors take credit for their work, to being perceived negatively by faculty in reference to the handling of discipline problems.

Black (1980) asked questions of assistant principals to determine the most satisfying and the least satisfying aspects of their job. To these questions the following answers were given. The best part of the job, according to 60% of the respondents, is working with teachers and department heads in improving and modifying the instructional program. The worst part is four fold: handling disciplinary cases, cafeteria duty, hall duty, and disciplining large masses of students.

Three other studies looked at ways of improving the assistant principalship listing ideas that might help. These studies by Howley (1985), Erickson (1985) and Gorton (1987) had the following things to say. Howley said that certain changes are needed if anyone is to reach one's potential while in the assistant principalship. These changes include involving the assistant principal in decision making, in preparing schedules, in drawing budgets, and in developing curriculum. Erickson (1985) found that changes should be made slowly, that the administrator is not one of the teachers, and that leadership must be earned. Gorton (1987) made four suggestions for maximizing the assistant principal's leadership: expanding the job,

becoming an advocate, increasing the rewards, and facilitating professional growth.

Marshall and Greenfield (1987) stated that assistant principals are thrown into administrative roles without proper orientation. Panyako and Rorie (1987) said that "traditionally, the assistant principal has been less well-versed in school administration and management than the principal" (p. 6) and that they are thus being "assigned" lesser administrative details. Marshall and Greenfield (1987) found that new administrators must find ways to cope with their positions and, at the same time, learn to hide their shock regarding what they do not know.

Staff (1988) conducted a study among assistant principals and principals in the state of Michigan. The study looked at the responsibilities and authority of the secondary school assistant principal. One hundred fifty-two schools participated in the study. Results were obtained through the development and distribution of a questionnaire composed of several demographic questions and 65 tasks to be rated on a five point scale from no authority or responsibility to sole authority or responsibility. The following is a list of those things included in the assistant principal's work load:

. supervising the school in the absence of the principal,

. monitoring student attendance,

. monitoring student behavior,

. dealing with student behavior,

. disciplining students,

. coordinating activities for student awareness of discipline code,

. supervising student's discipline code,

. planning pre- and post-observation conferences,

. consulting with parents and students,

. rewarding students for acceptable behavior, and

. conducting pre- and post-observation conferences.

Calabrese (1991) found assistant principals in effective schools to be dynamic, enthusiastic, creative, and caring. He stated that there is little support for the role of the traditional assistant principal, that researchers belittle the role, that principals ignore the talents of the assistant principal, and that educational organization experts try to discover alternatives. Calabrese believed that the assistant principal fits into the world of teachers, students, parents, and administration with apparent ease. Pellicer and Stevenson (1991) agreed stating that the assistant principal is a vital part of the school leadership team, and as qualified as the principal in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience brought to the job.

Panyako and Rorie (1987) summed it up very well when they said that "as schools have become more complex and taken on more of societies [sic] 'cultural demands', it has become necessary for school leadership systems to consider redefining the assistant principalship" (p. 8). Modern

assistant principals are just as much educated as the principal, and in some cases, have a lot of on-the-job experience. Today's assistant principal has been indoctrinated in school management; school law; educational and psychological measurement; staff supervision and evaluation; and effective communication with students, parents, and the community.

Summary

This chapter has examined the literature and found many and varied duties and responsibilities carried out by assistant principals. While there is no conclusive evidence that there is a set of duties and responsibilities for the assistant principal, 26 of the authors related 20 duties common to the assistant principal. These duties include discipline, attendance, student activities, staff support and evaluation, building supervision, guidance, co-curricular activities, athletics, community agencies, master schedules, fill in for principal, building operations, budget, reports, transportation, curriculum, communications, cafeteria, school calendar, and locks and lockers. Table 1 (p. 54) provides a summary of the authors' perceptions of the most common duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal.

TABLE 1

A Summary of the Authors' Most Common Responsibilities of the Assistant Principal

AUTHORS	RESPONSIBILITIES				
	Discip.	Atten.	Stud.	Staff	Bldg.

			Activ.	Suppo.	Super.
Brown and Rentchler (1973)	X		X	X	X
Black (1980)	X				X
Assistant Principals Commission (1980)	X	X			
Job Description (1980)	X	X		X	
Mitchell (1980)	X				
Potter (1980)	X	X	X	X	
Kriekard and Norton (1980)	X	X		X	
Reed and Conners (1982)	X		X		X
Miller and Lieberman (1982)	X				
Bates and Shank (1985)	X	X	X		
Hess (1985)	X			X	X

TABLE 1 Continued

AUTHORS	Discip.	Atten.	RESPONSIBILITIES Stud. Activ.	Staff Suppo.	Bldg. Super.
Reed and Himmler (1985)	X	X	X		
Gorton and Kattman (1985)	X				
Greenfield (1985)	X		X		
Marshall and Greenfield (1985)	X	X		X	X
Rodrick (1986)	X	X			
Panyako and Rorie (1986)	X				X
Fulton (1987)	X		X		
Smith (1987)	X	X		X	X

Gorton (1987)	X				
Kelly (1987)	X	X	X	X	X
Buckner and Jones (1990)	X				
Nickerson and Rissmann-Joyce (1991)	X				
Calabrese (1991)	X				
Pellicer and Stevenson (1991)	X	X		X	X
Marshall (1992)	X		X	X	

TABLE 1 Continued

A Summary of the Authors' Most Common Responsibilities of the Assistant Principal

AUTHORS	RESPONSIBILITIES				
	Guid.	Cocurr. Activ.	Athle.	Comm. Agenc.	Master Sched.
Brown and Rentchler (1973)			X		
Black (1980)					X
Assistant Principals Commission (1980)				X	
Job Description (1980)	X			X	
Mitchell (1980)					
Potter (1980)					
Kriekard and Norton (1980)	X	X	X	X	X
Reed and Conners (1982)		X			
Miller and Lieberman (1982)					
Bates and Shank (1985)					
Hess (1985)					
Reed and Himmler (1985)	X		X		X
Gorton and Kattman (1985)					
Greenfield (1985)					
Marshall and Greenfield (1985)	X				
Rodrick (1986)					
Panyako and Rorie (1987)			X		
Fulton (1987)	X	X		X	X
Smith (1987)	X	X			
Gorton (1987)					

TABLE 1 Continued

AUTHORS	RESPONSIBILITIES				
	Guid.	Cocurr. Activ.	Athle.	Comm. Agenc.	Master Sched.
Kelly (1987)		X	X		
Buckner and Jones (1990)					
Nickerson and Rissmann-Joyce (1991)					
Calabrese (1991)				X	
Pellicer and Stevenson (1991)					X
Marshall (1992)				X	

TABLE 1 Continued

A Summary of the Authors' Most Common Responsibilities of the Assistant Principal

AUTHORS	RESPONSIBILITIES				
	Fill In Prin.	Bldg. Oper.	Budget	Report	Trans.
Brown and Rentchler (1973)					
Black (1980)					
Assistant Principals Commission (1980)					
Job Description (1980)	X				
Mitchell (1980)					
Potter (1980)		X			
Kriekard and Norton (1980)			X		
Reed and Conners (1982)					
Miller and Lieberman (1982)					
Bates and Shank (1985)					
Hess (1985)				X	
Reed and Himmler (1985)					
Gorton and Kattman (1985)					
Greenfield (1985)					
Marshall and Greenfield (1985)					
Rodrick (1986)				X	X
Panyako and Rorie (1987)					X
Fulton (1987)	X	X	X		X
Smith (1987)					
Gorton (1987)					

TABLE 1 Continued

AUTHORS	RESPONSIBILITIES				
	Fill In Prin.	Bldg. Oper.	Budget	Report	Trans.
Kelly (1987)	X	X	X	X	
Buckner and Jones (1987)					X
Nickerson and Rissmann-Joyce (1991)					
Calabrese (1991)					
Pellicer and Stevenson (1991)					
Marshall (1992)					

TABLE 1 Continued

A Summary of the Authors' Most Common Responsibilities of the Assistant Principal

AUTHORS	RESPONSIBILITIES				
	Curr.	Comm.	Cafe.	Calen.	Locks
Brown and Rentchler (1973)	X				
Black (1980)					
Assistant Principals Commission (1980)		X			
Job Description (1980)	X				
Mitchell (1980)					
Potter (1980)	X				
Kriekard and Norton (1980)		X			
Reed and Conners (1982)				X	
Miller and Lieberman (1982)					
Bates and Shank (1985)					
Hess (1985)					
Reed and Himmler (1985)					
Gorton and Kattman (1985)					
Greenfield (1985)					
Marshall and Greenfield (1985)					
Rodrick (1986)			X		
Panyako and Rorie (1987)			X		X
Fulton (1987)		X		X	
Smith (1987)					
Gorton (1987)					

TABLE 1 Continued

AUTHORS	RESPONSIBILITIES				
	Curr.	Comm.	Cafe.	Calen.	Locks
Kelly (1987)					X
Buckner and Jones (1987)					
Nickerson and Rissmann-Joyce (1991)					
Calabrese (1991)					
Pellicer and Stevenson (1991)	X				
Marshall (1992)	X				

It is an impossibility, according to the literature, for one person to carry out all of the duties and responsibilities listed herein. The literature further shows that the principal largely determines the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal, and that although the position of assistant principal is considered by many to be a stepping stone to the principalship, it is also considered by others to be a bona fide administrative career position in and of itself.

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